

Message Text

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ACTION OC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2356

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FREETOWN 3108

FOR OC/P; ALSO PASS AF/EX

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ACIN, AFSP

SUBJECT: AIR POUCH:LOCAL PICKUP & DELIVERY CHARGES/POST VEHICLE
ALLOCATION

REF: 5FAM 356.1

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE HAS, IN THE PAST, IMPOSED A REQUIREMENT THAT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN FREETOWN UTILIZE THE SERVICES OF ONE OF TWO SHIPPING COMPANIES TO CLEAR DIPLOMATIC BAGS ARRIVING IN FREETOWN. WITH A "CAPTIVE MARKET" THE EFFICIENCY OF THESE COMPANIES HAS STEADILY DECLINED AND UNACCEPTABLE DELAYS IN RECEIPT OF POUCHES BY THIS MISSION ARE BEING ENCOUNTERED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE COST OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED HAS STEADILY INCREASED.

2. THE GOSL IS A SIGNATORY TO THE VIENNA ACCORD WHICH PROVIDES FOR FREE AND UNIMPEDED DELIVERY OF DIPLOMATIC POUCHES, AND IT IS FELT THAT THE MISSION COULD SUCCESSFULLY APPROACH THE GOSL FOR WAIVER OF THE CLEARING FIRM REQUIREMENT; HOWEVER THE PRESENT RESOURCES OF THE EMBASSY ARE SO LIMITED THAT DIFFICULTY WOULD BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENCOUNTERED IN EFFECTING THE ACTUAL PICKUP AND CLEARING

OF THE POUCHES.

3. DUE TO THE REMOTENESS OF THE AIRPORT FROM THE CITY OF FREETOWN, TRIPS TO CLEAR POUCHES TAKE NEARLY A FULL WORK DAY. AT THE PRESENT TIME, PICKUP WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE THREE TIMES PER WEEK, AND WOULD TIE UP THE SERVICES OF A DRIVER, A CUSTOMS CLEARING CLERK, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY ONE OF THE VEHICLES FROM THE ALREADY SORELY TAXED MISSION MOTOR POOL.

4. AT THE PRESENT WAGE SCALE IN FREETOWN, A COMBINATION DRIVER/POUCH EXPEDITOR/CUSTOMS CLERK COULD BE HIRED FOR LESS THAN EXPENSES INVOLVED IN PAYING THE CLEARING FIRMS. VEHICULAR SUPPORT WOULD HAVE TO BE PROVIDED HOWEVER. THE MOST APPROPRIATE VEHICLE WOULD BE A 1/2 OR 3/4 TON CURB SIDE VAN, ON A THREE YEAR REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE.

5. ABOVE COMBINATION OF PERSONNEL AND VEHICLE COULD BE USED FOR DIPLOMATIC AIR POUCH PICKUP, AS TRANSPORTATION FOR COURIER EXCHANGES, FOR PICKUP AND CLEARING OF AIR FREIGHT, FOR IN-CITY MESSENGER SERVICE, AND FOR IN-CITY DELIVERY OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT. COSTS WOULD BE CHARGEABLE UNDER SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO THE FOUR AGENCIES.

6. ACTION REQUESTED:

-. ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE ADDITIONAL LN POSITION AS DRIVER/POUCH EXPEDITOR,

B. ALLOCATION OF ONE ADDITIONAL VEHICLE TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT.

7. IF FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION GTVEN THE ABOVE REQUEST, EMBASSY WILL APPROACH GOSL FOR WAIVER OF THE CLEARING FIRM REQUIREMENT IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF APPROVAL. SAMUELS

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